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**Talking Points  
for Meeting with  
Gerald Gahina, Special Representative,  
Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)  
in Room 3519 NS  
at 1445 on June 23, 1994**

**General Points: USG Humanitarian Actions to Date**

- Since April 1994, the U.S. Government has financed \$95 million worth of emergency activities, e.g., food and non-food commodities, services and their transport to the region. Additional assistance is likely.
- Some activities can only pre-position their funds and commodities until access to those in need improve. Similarly, other funds reserved for the Rwanda crisis can only be obligated when NGOs can develop and submit quality proposals that can be implemented.
- The USG continues to encourage the UN and NGO humanitarian activities in northern Rwanda as well as in other areas where there are people in need.

**General Points: Initial RPF actions on humanitarian issues**

- The establishment and continuation of monthly meetings and sector working groups has been positive.
- The objective of holding NGOs accountable is good.

**Recent Developments: Key RPF Actions on humanitarian issues**

- The lack of full cooperation from the RPF resulted in the cancellation of the UN/NGO assessment scheduled for June 21-22.
- The assignment of "territories" to NGOs, while not providing the necessary escorts or granting access to work in assigned locations is hampering NGO operations.
- The lack of "RPF escorts" for the NGOs hampers their ability to execute programs. More specifically, problems arise from :
  - the lack of guides or escorts on week-ends, and
  - the assignment of less guides than territories assigned (e.g., three different territories, but only one guide).

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- The assignment of staff to NGOs without careful regard for the NGOs' needs hampers operations. Specifically,:
  - the actual numbers of Rwandan staff assigned do not match needs (e.g., some cases too many, in other cases too few),
  - the skill mixes assigned do not match the actual needs for the "assigned" territories and tasks.
- The lack of active support for harvesting food in a situation where there is a ready harvest and people in need raises questions on whether food is being viewed as a weapon.
- The agreement in principle to trace and reunite unaccompanied children is very encouraging.
- The progress in sorting out payments to staff working for NGOs is encouraging, although still likely to be problematic (e.g., how will adjustments to the food and non-food baskets be made?)

## Points to Discuss

- The objective of holding NGOs accountable is good, but the manner used to attain the objective is equally important. If those passing judgement on performance are themselves viewed as being a major constraint on what the NGOs are able to accomplish, it tarnishes the objective. Specifically, the validity and objectivity of the RPF "report card" are drawn into question as is the objectivity of the RPF towards NGOs in general (e.g., favoritism to WFP, an organization well-known for its lack of accountability).
- The manner in which the RPF works with the NGOs can be viewed by many observers as a powerful indicator of how the RPF will work in a pluralistic setting in the future.
- The issue of establishing a data base to reunite unaccompanied children with family is also being addressed through a larger forum, including UNHCR and UNICEF. To be effective, the data base needs to include information from all NGOs operating on this subject.
- The style of trying to pit NGOs against one another is a risky approach that can hamper relief operations.